

[0033] The extrusion of the cooked product may be effected into an edible or inedible casing to provide additional structural integrity to the extruded mass until frozen. Where an inedible casing is used, this casing is removed when the extruded mass has been frozen. Where an edible casing is used, this may remain in contact with the extruded mass. Alternatively, the extrusion operation may be carried out without a casing.

[0034] The ratio of coating to scrambled egg filling is variable depending on the shape of the product. In providing the breaded coating, the frozen egg products, which may be in the form of fingers or nuggets of various cross-sectional shapes, are coated with a predust, after an initial moistening or tempering of the surface. The egg products then are dipped into prepared batter and transferred to a breading operation. The battered products are completely coated with breading. The final product then is frozen for packaging. Alternatively, the product may be par-fried, for example for 20 seconds at 200° C., prior to freezing.

[0035] The novel scrambled egg product provided herein may be in the form of cylindrical fingers about 1.8 to 2.5 cm in diameter and about 5 cm long, although other dimensions and shapes may be used, as discussed above. The products have a long frozen shelf life of about 6 to 12 months.

[0036] The frozen egg products may be reheated for consumption by frying, oven heating or by microwave. In a frying procedure, frying oil may be preheated to about 180° C. and the frozen fingers or nuggets placed in the preheated oil and fried for 4 minutes or until golden brown. The cooked egg fingers or nuggets are drained and served. In an oven cooking procedure, the oven may be preheated to 190° C., the frozen egg fingers or nuggets placed on a tray and baked for 20 minutes. The baked egg fingers or nuggets are then served. In a microwave procedure, the egg products may be reheated for 30 seconds on HIGH in a 1000 W microwave.

[0037] The reheated egg fingers or nuggets have a medium egg flavour inside and a toasted flavour from the coating. The reheated egg fingers or nuggets have a crispy outer coating and a soft moist core with small egg pieces. The egg fingers or nuggets have a pale tan colour which can be formulated to turn golden brown with cooking. The interior of the reheated egg fingers or nuggets is a pale yellow colour with visible egg pieces.

[0038] The novel egg product of the invention, therefore, is a convenient, egg snack food product that can be reheated through frying, baking or microwave for consumption.

EXAMPLES

Example 1

[0039] This Example illustrates one embodiment of egg product provided in accordance with the invention.

[0040] Egg nuggets (fingers) were prepared comprising approximately 80 wt % egg filling and approximately 20 wt % coating. The formulations of the egg core and the nuggets are set forth in the following Tables VI and VII:

TABLE VI

Ingredient	wt %
Whole Egg	76.28
Canola Oil	0.92
Water	9.19
Salt	1.5
Citric Acid	0.05
Xanthan Gum	0.28
Skim Milk Powder	2.76
Modified Starch	1.38
Pepper Oleoresin	0.09
Liquid Albumen	6.86
Gelatin	0.69
Total	100.00

[0041]

TABLE VII

Product	
Ingredient	wt %
Egg Core	78.42
Predust	1
Batter + Water	7.80
Breading	7.80
Par-fry Oil Pickup	3.55

[0042] Whole eggs were blended with a dry mix of citric acid, salt, skim milk powder and xanthan gum at about 5° to 6° C. followed by the addition of modified starch, oil, water and pepper. The mixture was agitated for about 10 minutes and cooled immediately to below 4° C. to provide a stock base.

[0043] The stock base was pre-tempered to 10° to 15° C. in about 180 minutes to permit improved temperature distribution during cooking and setting of starch and gums. The pre-tempered stock base then was heated in a cooker to 68° C. At 68° C., the partly scrambled egg is wet, moist and paste-like. When this condition is reached in about 30 to 40 minutes cooking time, liquid albumen, pre-tempered at 10° to 15° C., containing gelatin was added evenly onto the scrambled egg and mixed therewith.

[0044] The cooker temperature was then adjusted to 105° C. and the eggs cooked for another 7 minutes or until the eggs looked dry and had a pleasant yellow colour to provide a scrambled egg product having a temperature of about 75° C.

[0045] The cooked scrambled eggs were cooled to below 4° C. for extrusion. The cooled scrambled eggs at 10° C. were extruded using a Vemag extruder and the extruded mass cut into pieces to provide egg pieces sized 1.9 cmx3.8 cm. The extruded cores were frozen to a temperature of about -25° C.

[0046] Egg cores were tempered at about 20° C. until the surface temperature of the cores reached about 0° C. Egg cores were then transferred to a breading line conveyor. Cores were first coated with a predust at a rate of about 1 wt %. Dusted egg cores were then immersed in a batter held at a temperature of about 6.5° C. Immediately after applying the batter, the cores were coated with breading. The total